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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

The Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley holds Video Conferencing with Banks for major push to cash less transactions; Banks to now focus on stepping-up transactions in mission mode through alternate banking channels such as NEFT, mobile wallets, pre-paid cards, QR codes, pay-roll cards, debit and credit cards and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) among others.

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The Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley emphasised that physical currency must shrink while the economy should expand, shifting more and more focus to digital currency. He said that one of the major objectives of withdrawal of legal tender status on Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 notes was to move the Indian economy further towards digital transactions. Shri Jaitley was speaking while reviewing the latest status after withdrawal of legal tender nature of old Rs.500 and Rs.1,000 notes in a Video Conferencing with CMDs/CEOs of Public and Private Sector Banks today. Series of decisions were taken during the meeting.

In this direction, most Banks have already begun a promotional exercise by waiving-up to end December MDR charges on debit cards. Banks will now be focussing on significantly stepping-up transactions in mission mode through alternate banking channels such as NEFT, mobile wallets, pre-paid cards, QR codes, pay-roll cards, debit and credit cards and Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Apart from urban areas, Banks will increase and sustain their focus on semi-urban and rural areas. This outreach would be backed-up by an advertising campaign from Indian Bankers Association (IBA) including demonstration videos on how to use cards and other modes for cash less transactions.

As the rush at bank branches is now reducing, banks will restart normal lending activities and in particular Mudra loans. These would help meet restocking requirements of enterprises by way of working capital delivered through Mudra cards.

Sowing season for Rabi and crops like potato is currently underway in many States. Necessary resources for the purpose have been provided by NABARD and daily releases to DCCBs (District Co-operative Banks) are a focus area of monitoring.

With these and other steps already underway, there is a clear path towards more digital transactions by all citizens. This will serve the larger objective of making banking activity easier and achieving the goal of financial inclusion that the Government is committed to.
